DR. COOK, IN LAST CHAPTER OF STORY OF DASH TO POLE, WRITES OF BATTLE FOR LIFE AGAINST FAMINE AND FROST IN FORCED MARCHES OF RETURN TRIP FROM TOP OF EARTH

'The Conquest of the Pole,' Written for the Herald, Ends with This Chapter

The Discoverer Tells of His Departure for the South and of the Realization That Soon Came to Him That the Real Test Was Yet to Come.

FIRST DAYS PASS QUICKLY, LONG MARCHES ARE RECORDED AND THE WEATHER IS FAIR

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PRINTED

In the first instalment of his thrilling story, "The Conquest of the Pole," printed in the Herald of Wednesday, September 15, Dr. Frederick A. Cook told of the start from Gloucester on the Bradley, of the voyage to the polar seas and of the overhauling en route of the equipment needed for the dash to the pole.

In a graphic manner the discoverer wrote a story of Eskimo life that never has been excelled for human interest. He told of the home life, the tragedy and comedy that mingle in the dreary existence of the dwellers in the Arctic, and of the childlike eagerness of the natives to trade their valuable furs and ivories for the simplest things of civilization.

The yacht, her owner, Mr. John R. Bradley, the explorer and his party were pictured in their preliminary work for the final dash.

Finally, after describing the various places visited in Greenland in search of guides and information as to conditions further north, Dr. Cook wrote of the trip across Inglefield Gulf, past Cape Auckland and on toward Cape Robertson.

Here the discoverer closed the first part of his narrative, with Etah and Annootok, the last points of call, looming in the icy distance.

In the second instalment Dr. Cook described the voyage to Etah and then on to Annootok, the place of plenty, which he selected as the base for his dash to the pole.

In the third instalment the explorer described the work of preparing his winter quarters, closing with a graphic description of a narwhal hunt.

In the fourth instalment Dr. Cook described the approach of the long Arctic night, which caused his party at Annootok to become very active in preparing for the dash to the pole.

In the fifth instalment Dr. Cook told of the actual start on February 19, 1908, and described the equipment he took for his great final dash.

In the sixth instalment the discoverer told of the first progress of his little party and the last sight of land, and his adventures on the perilous trip with the two Eskimos who went to the pole with him.

In the seventh instalment Dr. Cook described how his Eskimo companions saved his life.

In the eighth chapter Dr. Cook gave a vital picture of the terrors of the Arctic cold.

In the ninth instalment Dr. Cook described the lifeless lands passed before the pole was reached.

In the tenth chapter Dr. Cook described the near approach to the pole.

In the eleventh instalment Dr. Cook told of the final struggle and the discovery of the pole.

Twelfth Instalment

THE CONQUEST OF THE POLE.

By Dr. Frederick A. Cook.

DURING the first hour of April 23 backs were turned to the pole and to the sun. Our exploring ambition had been thoroughly satisfied. There were few glances backward.

The eagerness to solve the mystery had served its purpose and the memory of the adventure for a time remained as a reminder of reckless daring. As we now moved along the feeling of elation slowly subsided with the realization of the prospective difficulties of the return. Though the mercury was still frozen and the sun's perpetual flush was lost in a frigid blue, the time was at hand in lower latitudes for the ice to break and drift southward.

With correct reasoning all former expeditions had planned to return to land and secure a line of retreat by May 1. We could not hope to do so until early in June. It seemed, therefore, probable that the ice along the outskirts of the polar sea would be much disrupted and that open water, small ice and rapid drifts would seriously interfere with our return to a sure footing on the shores of Nansen Sound. All of this and many other possibilities were carefully considered before, but the conquest of the pole was not possible without risks.

We had started earlier than all other polar aspirants and no time had been lost en route. If misfortune came to us it could not be because of wasted energies or unnecessary delay. In the last days of the onward rush to success there was neither time nor opportunity to ponder over the bitters of subsequent remorse, but now, facing southern skies under which was home and all for which we lived, the back trail seemed indescribably long. In cold sober thought, freed from the intoxication of polar enthusiasm, the difficulties darkened in color. We now saw that the crucial stage of the campaign was not the taking of the pole. The test of our fitness as boreal conquerors was to be measured by the outcome of a final battle for life against famine and frost.

The first days, however, passed rapidly. With fair weather and favorable ice long marches were made.

Outline of Plans for Return.

We aimed to return along the one-hundredth meridian. There were three important objects to be gained by a route somewhat west of the northward march. The increasing easterly drift would thus be counterbalanced. We hoped to get near enough to the new lands to explore a part of the coast and a wider belt would be swept out of the unknown area.

The pack drift proved quite active and we were quickly carried eastward beyond our daily drift allowances. On April 30 the pedometer registered one hundred and twenty-one miles, and by our system of dead reckoning, which was usually correct, we should have been at latitude 87.59, longitude 100. The nautical observations gave latitude 88.1, longitude 97.42. We were therefore drifting eastward with increasing speed, and to counterbalance this a still more westerly course was set.

At this time the never changing sameness of the daily routine was again felt. The novelty of success and the passion of the home run were no longer operative. The scenes of shivering blue wearied the eye, and there was no inspiration in the moving sea of ice to gladden the heart. The thermometer rose and fell between 30 and 40 below zero Fahrenheit, with a ceaseless wind. It was still very cold. The first of May was at hand, bringing to mind the blossoms and smiles of a kindly world, but here all nature was narrowed to lines of ice. The sun circled the skies in lines of glaring, but its heat was a sham and its light a torment.

With weary nerves and compass in hand my lonely march ahead of the sleds was continued. Progress was satisfactory. We had passed the eighty-ninth and eighty-eighth parallels. The eighty-seventh and the eighty-sixth would soon be under foot, and the sight of the new lands should compel action. These hard fought times were days long to be remembered, but only the marks of the pencil now remain to tell the story of a suppressed existence.

Fellow Feeling for Dogs.

The long strain of the march had given a brotherly sympathy to the trio of human strugglers. Under the same strain was made the descent to canine levels. The dogs, though still possessing the savage ferocity of the wolf, had taken us into their community. We now moved among them without hearing a grunt of discord, and their sympathetic eyes followed until we were made comfortable on the cheerless snows. If our dogs happened to be placed near enough they edged up and encircled us, giving the benefit of their animal fires. To remind us of their presence frost covered noses were frequently pushed under the bag, and occasionally a cold snout touched our warm skin with a rude awakening. We loved the creatures, however, and admired their superb brute strength. Their adaptability was a frequent topic of conversation. With a pelt that was a guarantee against all weather conditions, they threw themselves down to the sweep of the winds—in open defiance of death dealing storms. They willingly did a prodigious amount of work each day, and then as bedfellows they offered their fur as shelter and bones as head rests to their two footed companions. We had learned to appreciate the advantage of their beating breasts. The bond of animal fellowship had drawn tighter and tighter in a long run of successive adventures. And now there was a stronger reason than ever to appreciate power, for together we were seeking an escape from a world which was never intended for creatures with thumping hearts.

Much very heavy ice was crossed near the eighty-eighth, but the endless unbroken fields of the northward trails were not again seen. The weather changed considerably. The light cutting winds from the west increased in force and the spasmodic squalls came at shorter intervals. The clear purple and blues of the seas were gradually changed to light gray, and a rush of frosty needles came over the pack for several hours each day.

Could Brook No Delay.

The inducement to seek shelter in cemented walls of snow and wait for better weather was very great. But such delays foreshadowed certain starvation. Under fair conditions there was barely food enough to reach land, while even short delays might easily jeopardize our return. We could not, therefore, do otherwise than to force ourselves against the wind and drift with all possible speed, closing the eye to unavoidable suffering.

With no alternative, we tried to persuade ourselves that conditions might be worse.

The eighty-seventh was crossed, the eighty-sixth was neared, but there came a time when both mind and body wearied of the whole problem of forced resolution.

The hard work of igloo building was now a thing of the past—only one had been built since leaving the pole, and in it a precious day was lost, while the atmospheric fury changed the face of the endless expanse of desolation. The little silk tent now housed us sufficiently from the icy airs. There were still fifty degrees of frost, but with hardened skins and insensible nerve filaments the torture was not so keenly felt.

The steady diet of pemmican and tea and biscuits was now entirely satisfactory. We longed for enough to give a real filling sense, but the ration was slightly reduced rather than increased. The change in life from winter to summer, which should take place at about this time of the year, was in our case marked only by a change in shelter, from the snow house to the tent, and our bed was moved from the soft snow shelf of the igloo to the hard, wind swept crust.

Trivialities Food for Thought.

In my wakeful watches to get a peep of the sun at just the right moment I was kept awake during much of the resting period, and for pastime my eyes wandered from snorting dogs to snoring men. During one of these idle moments there came a solution of the utility of the dog's tail, a topic with which I had been at play for several days. It is quoted here at the risk of censure, because it is a typical phase of our lives which cannot be illustrated otherwise. Seeming trivialities were seized upon as food for thought. Why has the dog a tail at all? The bear, the musk ox, the caribou and the hare, each in its own way succeeds very well with but a dwarfed stub. Why does nature in the dog expend its best effort in growing the finest fur over a seemingly useless line of tail bones? The thing is distinctive, and one could hardly conceive the creature without this accessory, but nature in the Arctic does not often waste energy to display beauties and temperament. This tail must have an important use, otherwise it would soon fall under the knife of frost and time. Yes! It was imported into the Arctic by the wolf progenitor of the dog from warmer lands, where its swing served a useful purpose in fly time. A nose made to breathe warm air requires some protection in the Far North. No animal feels this shortcoming as much as man. The dog supplied the need with his tail. At the time when I made this discovery a cold wind charged with cutting crystals brushed the pack. Each dog had his back arched to the wind and his face veiled with an effective curl of his tail. He was comfortably shielded from icy torment by an appendage adapted to that very purpose.

A Heavy Snowstorm.

On May 6 we were stopped at six A. M. by the coming of the gloom of an unusual gale. The wind had been steady and strong all night, but we did not heed its threatening increase of force until too late. It came from the west, as usual, driving coarse snow with needle points. The ice about was old and hummocky, offering a difficult line of march, but some shelter. In the strongest blasts we threw ourselves over the sled behind hummocks and gathered new breath to force a few miles more.

Finally when no longer able to force the dogs through the blinding drift we sought the lee of an uplifted block of ice. Here suitable snow was found for a snow house and a few blocks were cut and set, but the wind swept them away like chips. The tent was tried, but it could not be made to stand in the rush of the roaring tumult. In sheer despair we crept into the tent without erecting the pole. Creeping into the bags, we then allowed the flapping silk to be buried by the drifting snow. Soon the noise and discomfort of the storm were lost and we enjoyed the comfort of an icy grave. An efficient breathing hole was kept open and the wind was strong enough to sweep off the weight of a dangerous drift. A new lesson was thus learned in fighting the battle of life which was afterward useful.

Several days of icy despair now followed each other in rapid succession. The wind did not rise to the full force of a storm, but it was too strong and too cold to travel. The food supply was noticeably decreasing. The daily advance was reduced. With such weather starvation seemed inevitable.

Camp was moved nearly every day, but ambition sank to the lowest ebb. To the atmospheric unrest was added the instability of broken ice and the depressing mystery of an unknown position. For many days no observations had been possible and our location could only be guessed at.

The maddening struggle was daily forced, while the spirits were pressed to the verge of extinction. Now that the object of our trip had been accomplished much of the incentive was gone. At times it seemed as if our life's work had been accomplished, and to have lain down for the final sleep would have been easy, but the feeble fires of the homing passion kept the eye open.

At the Eighty-fourth Parallel.

On May 24 the sky cleared long enough to give us a set of observations. We were on the eighty-fourth parallel, near the ninety-seventh meridian. The new lands were hidden behind a low mist. The ice was much crevassed and drifted eastward. Many open spaces of water were noted in the west by patches of water sky.

The pack was sufficiently active to give us considerable anxiety, though pressure lines and open water did not at the time seriously impede our progress.

There remained on the sleds scarcely enough food to reach our caches, unless we averaged fifteen miles daily. On the return from the pole to here we had only been able to make twelve miles daily. Now our strength, even under fair conditions, did not seem to be equal to more than ten miles. The outlook was far from hopeful to me, though the sight of the cleared sky infused new courage into Etukhishuk and Ahwelah.

Trying to make the best of our hard lot, a straight course was set for the musk ox lands of the inner crossing.

At the eighty-third parallel we found ourselves to the west of a large tract extending southward. The ice changed to small fields. The temperature rose to zero and a persistent mist obscured the heavens.

With a few lines on paper to register the life of suffering, the food for man and dog was reduced to a three-quarter ration, while the difficulties of ice travel rose to disheartening heights.

At the end of a struggle of twenty days through thick fog the sky cleared and we found ourselves far down in Crown Prince Gustav Sea, with open water and impossible small ice as a barrier between us and Heiberg Island.

With the return to Annootok rendered impossible by the unfortunate westerly drift our only alternative was to go south with the ice. We hoped in this course to find game for food and fuel. The Scottish whalers enter Lancaster Sound and touch at Port Leopold. The distance to this point was shorter than that to Greenland, and by this route I hoped that I could return to Europe during the same year, 1908.

Passing through Hassel Sound between the Ringnes Lands bears and seals were secured, and slowly we moved southward over Norwegian Bay into Wellington Channel. The ice was small, there was much open water and progress was slow, but the drift carried us along.

Crossed to Jones Sound.

At Pioneer Bay we were stopped by a jam of small ice over which sledding was impossible. Unable to wait for the ice to move because no large game was here secured, we crossed in early July to Jones Sound. Here again no big game was found. There was much open water and the folding canvas boat was spread for use.

Unable to feed the dogs, they were given the freedom of their wild progenitors, the wolves.

One sled was left here, the other was taken apart and placed in the boat. Then followed a long and perilous adventure by boat and sled, during which our last ammunition was expended in securing birds for food. After that by looped lines and slingshots birds were still captured.

Early in September we were beset on the shores of Baffin Bay with neither food, fuel nor ammunition. New implements were shaped, and we returned westward to Cape Sparbo, to seek a place to pitch a winter camp.

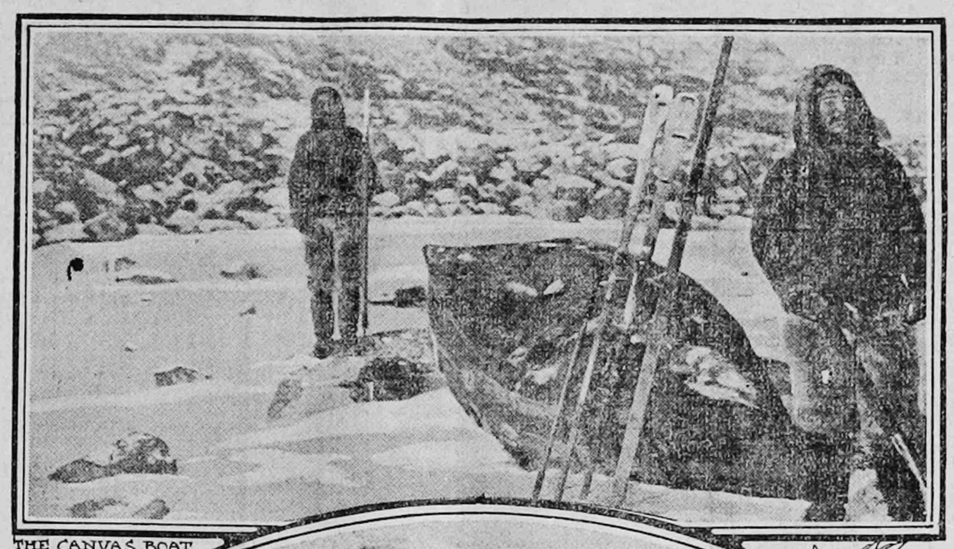
An underground den was built of stones, bones and turf, and with our primitive weapons we fought the walrus, the bear, the musk ox and other animals. Thus food, fuel and skins were secured and death by famine was averted.

The winter and the night of 1908-1909 were spent preparing food and equipment for the return.

On February 18, 1909, we started with a remodelled sled and reached our camp at Annootok in the middle of April. Here I met Mr. Harry Whitney and told him of our conquest of the pole.

Because a ship was to come after Mr. Whitney to take him direct to home shores, most of my instruments were intrusted to his care. Anxious to gain a few months in the return home, I proceeded by sled over land and sea southward to Upernavik and from there onward to Copenhagen by Danish steamers.

The End.



THE CANVAS BOAT.
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PHOTOS BY DR. COOK

THE MUSK OX OF JONES SOUND.
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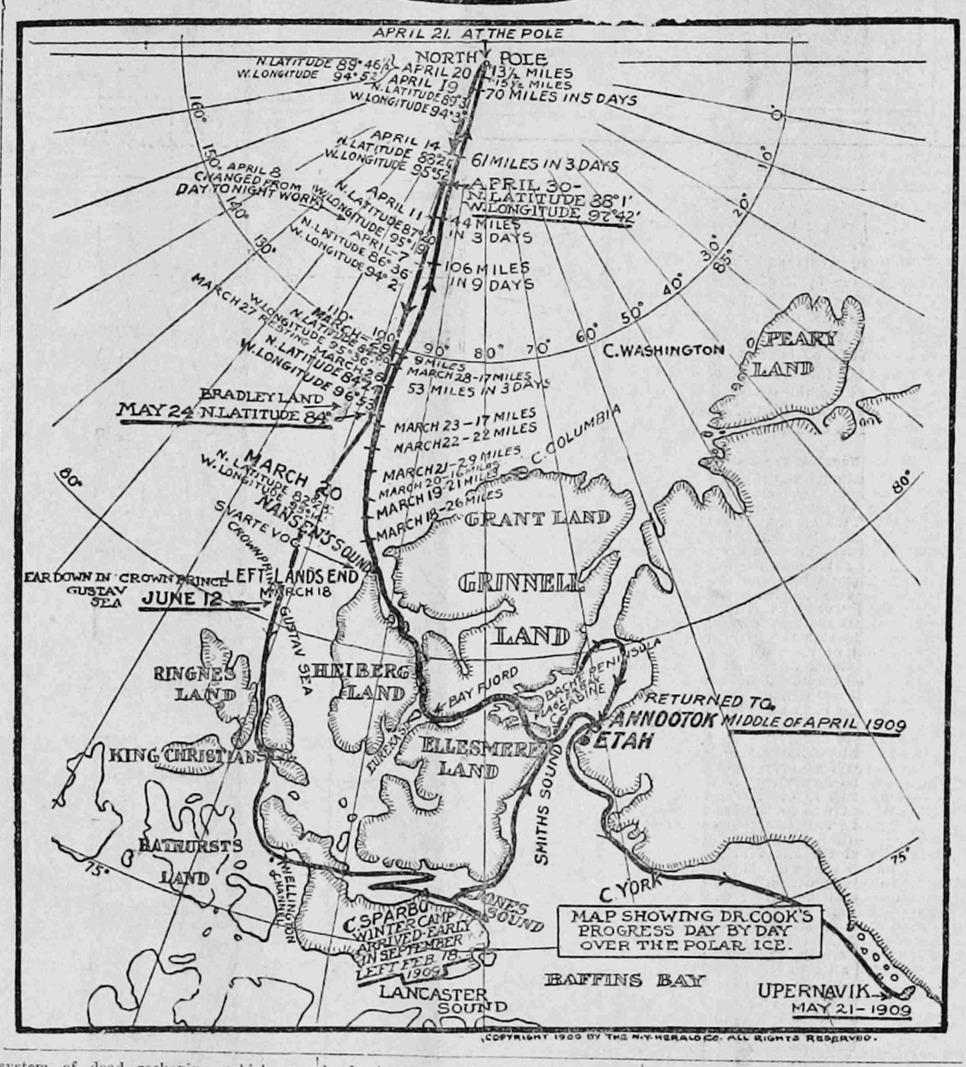

Heat of the Sun Is a Sham and Its Light a Torment to the Three Strugglers

With Weary Nerves and Compass in Hand, Dr. Cook Plods Ahead of the Sledges, Tracking the Route to Home and Food, Heat and Rest.